

REMARKS

There remains pending in this application claims 1, 3-7, 10, 13 and 14, of which claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 13 and 14 are independent. No claims have been added or cancelled.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

Independent claims 10, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,852,764). Claims 1, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kida et al. in view of Kawamura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,587,799). In view of the above amendments and the reasons which follow, the rejections are respectfully traversed.

Turning first to independent claims 1, 6 and 7, the invention as recited in each of those claims is directed to an image forming apparatus, control method and computer-readable storage medium, respectively, which relates to an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage trays of which positions are changeable so that one of the sheet storage trays can store an image formed sheet from a sheet discharge portion of the image forming apparatus. In this type of apparatus, it is required that there be time to change the position of a sheet storage tray to the sheets discharge position of the image forming apparatus. Applicant's invention is characterized in that, when a no-operation state on an operator continues for a predetermined time, it sets the image forming apparatus to a predetermined operation mode and changes the position of a sheet storage tray, which was assigned to the predetermined operation mode, to a sheet discharge position of the image forming apparatus so that the sheet storage tray can store a sheet even if not receiving a

job data for the predetermined operation mode. This makes it possible to form an image on a sheet quickly in the predetermined operation mode because the change of the sheet storage tray is not required.

Kida et al. provides a plurality of sheet storage units and discloses assigning sheet storage units for each of a copy mode, a facsimile mode, and a printer mode. However, according to Kida et al., the sheet storage tray of interest is determined only by rotating the switching members 55 and 57 and not by changing the position of the tray of interest with regard to the sheet discharge position of the copying machine. More specifically, since the sheet feeding path is determined by rotating the switching members 55 and 57, the time required for determining the path is very short. Accordingly, Kida et al. does not need to determine the rotation of the members 55 and 57 before feeding out a sheet from the copy machine.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's suggestion that Kawamura et al. discloses auto-clear operation means as recited in the claimed invention. In column 6, lines 1-14 of Kawamura et al., there is merely a disclosure of the operable state for inputting parameters such as the size of papers after a predetermined time following the last key operation, rather than changing an operation mode. Kawamura et al. simply is unrelated to a change of modes.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 1, 6 and 7 are neither taught nor suggested by the applied references, whether taken individually or in combination.

Turning next to independent claims 10, 13 and 14, these claims are also directed to an image forming apparatus, control method and computer-readable storage medium, respectively, and relate to an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet

processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage trays of which positions are changeable so that one of the sheet storage trays can store an image formed sheet from a sheet discharge portion of the image forming apparatus. The invention is characterized in that when switching among the plurality of modes, it controls the sheet processing apparatus so as to change the position of a sheet storage tray, which is assigned to the switched operation mode, to a sheet discharge position of the image forming apparatus, so that the sheet storage tray can store a sheet even if not receiving job data for the switched operation mode. Therefore, this makes it possible to form an image on a sheet quickly in the switched operation mode because the change of the position of the sheet storage tray is now required.

Kida et al. features a switching operation mode using key 26. However, Kida et al. fails to teach or suggest providing a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage trays of which positions are changeable. Kida et al. also fails to teach or suggest, as the switching to display a window corresponding to an operation mode among the plurality of operation modes, to control the sheet processing apparatus so as to change the position of the sheet storage tray, which is assigned to the switched operation mode, to a sheet discharge position so that the sheet storage tray can store a sheet even if not receiving a job data for the switched operation mode.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 10, 13 and 14, as amended, are distinguishable from Kida et al.

The remaining claims in the above application are dependent claims which depend either directly or indirectly from one of the above-discussed independent claims and are therefore patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to the

independent claims. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicant respectfully submits that all outstanding matters in the above application have been addressed and that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the above application are respectfully sought.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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